



A parent-run, parent-led grassroots organization fighting for affordable quality child care for all

Parent Voices chapters are hosted by child care resource and referral agencies throughout California.

“Keeping child care safe”

“Our state is (not) doing a good enough job keeping tabs on our child care centers and family child care homes,” says Shauna Bird of Sacramento, mother of eight-year-old Isaac. The Community Care Licensing department visits programs to make sure they follow health and safety rules. But budget cuts in recent years mean programs are inspected only once every five years!

“The long time between Licensing visits gives centers and family child care homes a lot of time to let things slide,” says Bird. “More regular visits by Licensing would keep child care safer.”

The Governor’s budget proposes to increase licensing visits to every three and a half years—but Parent Voices organizer Mary Ignatius says that’s “not often enough when it comes to children’s basic health and safety.” Parent Voices is campaigning for more funds so Licensing can make more frequent inspections.

Getting active

Bird got involved in the campaign because “my son was spanked in a family child care. This issue is so important because children deserve to be looked after in a safe and nurturing way.” Ignatius notes that spanking is not allowed in California child care programs.

Bird joined Parent Voices last year after she heard about it at her son’s child care center. “I went to two Parent Voices rallies and their annual Knowledge is Power conference. I got really excited about some of the stuff they were



Shauna Bird with Isaac.

SHAUNA BIRD

talking about. Over the past few months, I have gotten heavily involved.” Bird is also working on a degree in social work.

Reaching out to all parents

Though Parent Voices often takes on issues affecting low- and moderate-income parents, the organization plans to reach out to “all parents who currently use child care services” for this campaign, says Ignatius.

Parents spoke out at budget hearings in April and plan to also speak out about this issue at Parent Voices’ Stand for Children Day on May 2.

—Amanda Montague

Child care standards in California

A recent report from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies finds that California doesn’t provide enough oversight for child care programs:

- Licensing visits programs every five years, not quarterly
- Licensing is very understaffed
- Parents can’t see inspection and complaint reports online.

Online at www.naccrra.org/policy/scorecard.php

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